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Tripoli 2103
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O P 011500Z SEP 69
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4574
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BENGHAZI
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
CINCUSAFE
USCINCEUR
COMSIXTHFLT
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
AMEMBASSY BAIDA

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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RDS☐ or XDS☐ EXT. DATE
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ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☐
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PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

S E C R E T TRIPOLI 2103

1. ALTHOUGH ARMY ELEMENTS WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE WON CONTROL OF PRINCIPAL CENTERS OF POPULATION IN SMOOTHLY-ORGANIZED COUP, BELIEVE NEXT 48 HOURS WILL PROVIDE CLEARER PICTURE OF EXTENT SUPPORT THEY ENJOY OVER NEAR TERM WITHIN ARMED FORCES, INCLUDING ARMY ITSELF, AS WELL AS GENERAL POPULACE AND TRIBES. MOST IMMEDIATE PROBLEM PLOTTERS FACE IS ESTABLISHMENT OF THEIR AUTHORITY EITHER THROUGH JOINT COUNCIL OR DESIGNATION OF LEADER. "REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL" MEMBERSHIP HAS NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED AND INDICATION THAT MOVEMENT IS AIMED AT CORRUPTION WOULD SEEM EXCLUDE MILITARY PERSONALITIES PROMINENTLY MENTIONED IN PAST AS MOST LIKELY TO HEAD ANY ARMY-BACKED COUP ON KING'S DEATH.

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2. ONLY OFFSETTING FORCES WHICH MIGHT CHALLENGE ARMY LEADERSHIP HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN IDENTIFIED AS CYDEF IN EAST, TRIPOLITANIAN SECURITY FORCES IN WEST, AND TRIBES IN CYRENAICA. SINCE JUNE 1967, WHEN IT COLLAPSED DURING BENGHAZI RIOTS, WE HAVE TENDED DISCOUNT CYDEF AS EFFECTIVE FORCE IN ANY REAL SHOWDOWN. TRIPOLITANIAN SECURITY ELEMENTS, ALTHOUGH BETTER LED, HAVE NOTHING TO MATCH ARMY'S EQUIPMENT. AS FOR TRIBES, THEY COULD BE TROUBLESOME, BUT THEY, TOO LACK EQUIPMENT AND COHESION AMONG THEMSELVES.

3. THUS, A WE SEE IT, ANY REAL MUSCLE AIMED AGAINST ARMY ELEMENTS NOW IN CONTROL MUST COME FROM WITHIN ARMY ITSELF AND NOT RPT NOT ALL THE RETURNS ARE IN EITHER IN FORM OF CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES FROM KEY UNIT COMMANDERS OR, SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL FROM ANNOUNCEMENTS, THAT ALL UNITS HAVE JOINED QTE REVOLUTION UNQTE. BELIEVE THOSE IN ARMY WHO HAVE HITHERTO HELD BACK FROM MOVEMENT WILL SOON BEGIN FEEL PRESSURE TO SHOW SOLIDARITY. IF SUCH SUPPORT DOES NOT COME, DISSIDENT ARMY ELEMENTS MAY FEEL REQUIRED TAKE MEASURES TO ENSURE IT. THIS IS WHERE CLINCH COULD DEVELOP AND TEST OF NEW ARMY REGIME'S NEAR-TERM STAYING POWERS COULD BE CLARIFIED. ANOTHER TEST WOULD COME IF KING SUDDENLY DECIDED RETURN TO LIBYA. LONGER TERM PROSPECTS FOR PLOTTERS WILL REMAIN OBSCURE UNTIL THEIR LEADERSHIP AND PROGRAM ARE DEFINED AND TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS HAVE RECOVERED FROM SHOCK. HISTORICALLY, TRADITIONAL LIBYAN REPONSE TO POWER SITUATIONS HAS BEEN TO ACCOMMODATE TO WHOEVER IS ON TOP AND WAIT FOR BREAKS AND CHANCES FOR MANEUVER.

4. IF ARMY REGIME PASSES THAT FIRST (I.E., TO SURVIVE OVER NEXT FEW DAYS) TEST WE WOULD ASSUME IT WILL MAKE BID FOR INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION. IN VIEW DEPARTMENT'S EXPERIENCE WITH SIMILAR SITUATIONS ELSEWHERE, INCLUDING AFRICA, WE ASSUME THERE ARE ADEQUATE PRECEDENTS ON WHICH USG WILL BE ABLE TO DRAW IN DEC. ING LIBYAN CASE. WE FIND IT INTERESTING THAT ARMY SPOKESMAN, IN MEETING WITH CHARGES, AND THAT LIBYAN RADIO HAVE STATED MOVEMENT IS NOT AIMED AT ANY FOREIGN GOVERNMENT, THAT LIBYA WILL CONTINUE OBSERVE ITS INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND THAT FOREIGNERS IN COUNTRY MAY BE ASSURED OF PROTECTION. VIRTUALLY SAME LINE WAS EXPRESSED

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IN BAIDA AND BENGHAZI BY OIC'S BY REPS OF ARMY GROUP. STATEMENT AT 1450 BY REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL RE NEW REGIME'S INTENTIONS LESS REASSURING. SHOULD I BE APPROACHED BY "REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL" ON RECOGNITION ASPECT OF SITUATION, I PLAN LIMIT REPLY TO STATEMENT THAT MATTER WOULD BE REFERRED TO WASHINGTON.
GP-3.
BLAKE

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